Yersinia pseudotuberculosis infections in FoodNet 1996-2004

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Background: Relatively little is know about the epidemiology of *Yersinia. pseudotuberculosis*. A recent outbreak in Finland associated with salad consumption established this species as a foodborne pathogen. We describe the epidemiology of *Y. pseudotuberculosis* cases ascertained through FoodNet surveillance.

Methods: FoodNet conducted population-based active surveillance for laboratory-confirmed cases of yersiniosis in 5 sites in the US in 1996 expanding to 10 sites by 2004. Demographic, clinical, and outcome data was collected for each case. To describe differences in the epidemiology of yersiniosis by species, we analyzed these data using case-case comparisons by species.

Results: Between 1996 and 2004, 1410 *Yersinia* cases were ascertained; 391 (28%) cases with unknown species were excluded from the analysis. Of the remaining 1019 cases, 943 (93%) were YE, 34 were *Y. frederiksenii*, 15 were *Y. intermedia*, 11 were *Y. pseudotuberculosis*, 6 were *Y. kristensenii*, 5 were *Y. aldovae*, 3 were *Y. ruckeri*, 1 was *Y. bercovieri*, and 1 was *Y. pestis*. Among non-YE cases, *Y. pseudotuberculosis* cases were more likely to be male (64% vs. 45%), live in the western US (73% vs. 16%), admitted to hospital (73% vs. 25%), diagnosed in the winter months, and have blood isolate compared to the other non-YE cases (73% vs. 6%). Four of the 11 *Y. pseudotuberculosis* cases were diagnosed in 2003.

Conclusion: *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* is a serious and potentially emerging infection in the US. Further research is needed to determine the role of this species in gastroenteritis of unknown etiology and the extent of foodborne transmission.